idents because the district was primarily nonresidential. Yet, as an epicenter of high-end revitalization, development has rippled out in gentrification and displacement pressures for residents and local businesses in adjacent neighborhoods. The absence of theory building notwithstanding, *New York's New Edge* provides a thorough accounting of the current political, economic, and cultural dimensions of contemporary urban development.

Upscaling Downtown: From Bowery Saloons to Cocktail Bars in New York City. By Richard E. Ocejo. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014. Pp. xiv+257. $35.00 (cloth).

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Neighborhoods, like cities, differ radically in terms of their international standing as quintessential places in the global hierarchy. Readers of urban studies have now become familiar with accounts arising from New York City and, especially, the East Village, the Lower East Side, and the Bowery. Among the many who write about them, scholars such as Janet Abu-Lughod, Christopher Mele, Neil Smith, and Sharon Zukin have vividly depicted the natural history of transformations in Manhattan's East Side, taking a clear as well as multifaceted position toward the uneven development occurring in these neighborhoods. A further significant brick in building the social history of New York City is now provided by Richard Ocejo with his book on the commercial side of urban transformations.

The author's thesis is that the progrowth agenda of both public and private actors in New York City has led to a transformed commercial landscape made of bars and nightspots that "pay high rents and high taxes [. . .], provide employment, require costly permits and licenses, and [. . .] enliven and improve streets and neighborhoods, encouraging consumption and the growth of a commercial scene" (pp. 214–5). In a fashion that is witnessed as constantly spreading throughout the world, New York has followed a developmental path built around a sanitized and desirable urban environment. Commercial zoning, signature architectures, localization of university buildings, landmarking, and fiscal policies, especially tax abatements and incentives, have attracted in the first round, and then managed afterward, a new ensemble of place entrepreneurs, residents, and visitors. This regeneration pattern has been widely debated in urban studies literature and is fruitfully recalled in the second chapter of the book, where it is related to the local regulations that explain why openings of new activities took place in smaller residential streets, protected elsewhere in Manhattan from the side effects of nightlife. Ocejo wisely combines an institutional perspective with an interactionist one, where zoning codes and liquor licensing policies deal with the social action by residents, visitors, nightlife actors, and public officials. The result is a complex and fascinating ethnographic account of a

major change in urban life, the appearance of commercial gentrification as the last stage of urban uneven development.

Two main levels of analysis can be traced in *Upscaling Downtown*. The first one draws on the community study tradition of providing insights into community reactions and resistance to change, mainly through local political participation and activism. The community board activity is thus considered as a prototype of "urban participatory democracy" (p. 189), and the author clearly highlights the ambiguity of such an arena insofar as it provides a glimpse of real direct confrontation with daily political issues while undermining the real effect that may arise from it, given that the community board has only advisory power. The frustration of citizens and activists is patent, and one would rather be tempted to overinterpret and conceive such arenas as neoliberal kindergartens, where citizens-as-kids learn to keep away from political participation through standard local politics. Ocejo remains nonetheless ethnographically grounded in his observations and offers a precise description of divergent conceptions of community, mediated by the different class and generational perspectives at stake.

The second level relies on a traditional inquiry of social life in times of change, juxtaposing perspectives, visions, and interests of rival urbanites. This is probably where the author gets deeper into the urban realm; in the third chapter, for instance, we learn a lot about "nostalgia" as the key narrative tool for expressing "a version that is more favorable" (p. 92) to the early gentrifiers confronted with the newcomers who are, generally speaking, younger, richer, and less interested in eulogizing the past than the former generation of residents. The fact that each generation rebuilds uncritically its own foundations is a common feature in sociological analysis, but the social practices of nostalgic gatherings in bars and the boundary-making activity that emerge from Ocejo's fieldwork are compelling. Bartenders, especially, emerge as social actors with a surprisingly rich sociological understanding of the environment they share with others. The theoretical consequences are sketched mainly with reference to urban sociology and the way urbanites make sense of their belonging to the city, but the author could have gone further, for instance, embracing Wallerstein's historical constructionism and his reflections on how the present continuously produces a legitimate past (*Unthinking Social Science* [Temple University Press, 1991]). This would have helped to move such rich empirical findings from a localized nostalgia to a broader perspective of class appropriation of history, be it Avenue A in Manhattan or colonial India.

The rival perspective to the nostalgic one is clearly adopted by the newcomers; given the choice of scrutinizing the commercial side of gentrification, we learn, in chapter 4, to deal with "commercial pioneers," that is, the entrepreneurs. A rich, vivid, and nonjudgmental account by the author is what we get from this side of the story; particularly significant is the way in which these social actors embrace positively the politics of gentrification, affecting a self-absolving stance as community makers rather than as destroyers (pp. 124–32). Again, each generation has a specific position in

the social field of gentrification, and an honest way to illustrate the complexity of such space is to render its multivocality, which is fully accomplished in *Upscaling Downtown*. A policy of ethnographic representation based on the juxtaposition of voices and perspectives does not necessarily avoid a critical and political judgment on the overall process witnessed by Ocejo. This issue is properly addressed in the conclusion, where progrowth agendas are critically debated and neighborhood politics is at stake. Bars and nightspots are seen as quintessential urban viewpoints from which to observe the direction of change under a general upscaling of one of the most uneven cities in the Western world. This book adds new and fresh understandings of the contemporary basis of inequalities in the city by the establishment of "commercial gentrification" as its most recent bitter fruit.

Renegade Dreams: Living through Injury in Gangland Chicago. By Laurence Ralph. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. Pp. xxii+250. $20.00 (paper).

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Laurence Ralph spent three years living in "Eastwood," hanging out with locals and learning about their lives. The end result is *Renegade Dreams*, a beautifully written ethnography of Eastwood, a pseudonym for a working-class black community in Chicago. At around 180 pages, it is a quick, breezy read. In some ways, it reminds me of Harel Shapira's *Waiting for Jose*, another short, well-written ethnography that uses rich ethnographic vignettes to bring a community to life. The turn toward a more descriptive ethnographic style is fresh and makes this book engaging start to finish.

At first glance, *Renegade Dreams* is a book about "social injury" in Eastwood. Different chapters invite the reader into local struggles around redevelopment, the perils of gang life, and the lived experiences of HIV-positive youth. But, beneath the surface, Ralph tells a more nuanced and overlooked story about community resiliency. Ralph writes, "I saw how injury could be crippling, but could also become a potential, an engine, a generative force that propelled new trajectories" (p. 17).

This tension animates *Renegade Dreams* and marks an important departure from most urban ethnographies of poor black communities. Indeed, while ethnographers have long documented suffering in these spaces, few have asked the opposite question: How do people persevere (and thrive) under harsh conditions? *Renegade Dreams* is an important study because it tackles this question head-on. In some ways, Ralph continues the legacy of Carol Stack's *All Our Kin*, which examined similar issues from an earlier time.

Renegade Dreams is also an interesting book because it speaks to so many different audiences. Readers from various disciplines will find something to